powers of the recent act, for the establishment of the proposed Museum of Art; advising also a consideration of the question of accommodation for the council in the same building, with the additional cost, &c.——An improvement Act is much wanted at Gainsbro', and one firm there, it is said, has agreed to give 100*l.* towards procuring one. Some improvement, however, is about to be made in the paving of the streets.——At Liverpool, we understand that the Sanatory Committee have the state of the sewerage of the town under consideration. The whole of the existing system has been examined, and found to be in many respects defective. The great error appears to have arisen from forming the public sewers according to the direction of particular streets, instead of according to the level of the ground on which the town stands, considered as a whole. The result is, that many streets and districts are very imperfectly drained. We believe that a survey has been made of the existing sewers of the town, with a view to supplying defects, and causing all the different parts of the system to work to the same end.——The tender of Messrs. C. Lister and Son, for the erection of the church at Batby, is said to have been accepted. The works are to be proceeded with immediately.——The stone-masons at Rochdale and its vicinity, who are members of the trades' union, turned out on Monday week for an advance of 6d. per day. They have had 4s. per day during the winter, and their demand now is 4s. 6d. The masters contend, that under the depressed state of trade they are not able to give the advance required.——The proposal to establish an athenæum in Bolton has been abandoned, and the subscriptions already paid are to be returned.——Several liberal donations have been received towards the erection of the new church, so much needed at Clayton, and Mr. John Hirst having liberally given a site in the centre of the village, there is every prospect, says the *Bradford Observer*, of the building being speedily commenced.——A grant of 6,000*l.* for a washhouse, brewhouse, bakehouse, &c., to the West Riding Lunatic Asylum, at Wakefield, has been granted at the Spring Sessions, with 2,000*l.* "for certain apparatus therein."——Considerable improvements are about to be effected at Hull, in the vicinity of St. Paul's Church, now in course of erection; and a bridge is then to be thrown over the Cottingham drain, so that a good road will be opened up direct from Jarrett-street, Boad-street, &c., to the church. Other minor improvements are also talked of, and several streets will then be constructed leading to the new church.——Such is the briskness of the building trade in Kendal, and neighbourhood, says a contemporary, that masons and wallers are almost as hard to get as seed potatoes.——It has been proposed to build a new gaol and court-houses at Glasgow, and convert the present building into an additional infirmary.

MANCHESTER LUNATIC HOSPITAL COMPETITION.

Sir,—As it appears to be one of your objects to expose the abuses attendant upon competition designs, and if possible, to effect a reformation in this department of the profession, I beg leave to bring under your notice, a late competition for a Lunatic Hospital for the trustees of the Royal Infirmary of Manchester.

The terms of competition were, that the author of the best design should be engaged to erect the building at the usual commission, and the second best should receive 100*l.*, his drawings becoming the property of the trustees. The cost not to exceed 10,000*l.*, and a summary of a few general requirements, number of inmates, &c., was given.

The designs were delivered on the 1st February last, and on the 19th, a circular was sent to the authors of the non-selected designs, informing them, that their designs were not placed on the list, either as the architect to be employed or the one to receive the premium. In this circular no award is given, no allusion is made to the successful candidate nor to the second premium of 100*l.* From a letter published in one of the Manchester papers (*The Examiner*), it appears, that 52 designs were sent in, comprising upwards of 500 drawings, at an expense somewhere betwixt 2,000*l.* and 3,000*l.*; also that the committee who were the adjudicators upon the designs, did not meet until ten days after they were sent in.

You and your professional readers will be able to judge of the value of a decision made by a few non-professional persons upon the merits of such a number of designs, each of which, from the extent and variety of accommodation required, must have formed a study of considerable time, even to the most experienced professional man.

So much for the *committee*. Now what has been the conduct of the architects themselves (I should say those of Manchester)? While they complain of the discourtesy with which they have been treated, they quite agree that the conduct of the committee is exactly what they expected (for it now comes out that one of their own number is the appointed architect), and that they are quite certain it was pre-determined to employ the architect into whose hands the work is now placed. If this be the case, then their own simplicity has met with its proper reward.

With the possession of this knowledge or well-grounded suspicion, had they had the interest or honour of their profession sufficiently at heart, they would not only have refrained themselves from entering into competition, but they would have made the facts or suspicions public, as a warning to their professional brethren at a distance, who might thereby have saved themselves from a laborious and fruitless expenditure of time. As one of the latter, I have reason to complain of this. May I inquire of your numerous readers whether any of them can answer this question,—*Who has received the second premium of* 100*l. in this competition?*

The discourtesy manifested in this case on the part of the trustees of the Royal Infirmary of Manchester, and the apathy on the part of the architects there, give little hope of assistance from that quarter, in stifling an abuse against which all England cries aloud—or in elevating to its proper level, a profession shorn of its dignity, lowered in its importance, and treated with disrespect by those incompetent to judge either of its requirements, its usefulness, or its beauties.—I am, Sir, &c.,

April, 9, 1847. Comms.

FOUL AIR FROM SEWERS.

Sir,—To ensure a perfect system of sewage according to the present most approved method, ventilating shafts (to carry the noxious gases above the houses) are necessary appendages; yet they are rarely applied in consequence of the expense or their supposed awkward appearance. Without them, however, the most objectionable part of sewering still remains.

The foul air emitted from the sewers, through gratings or defective traps (which must occur at certain changes of the weather), still floats down the streets and into the houses. Were it possible to render visible this floating miasma, we should see our streets occupied with snakes and scorpions, and other nondescript reptiles, deadly to the human race, instead of pure air fit for the respiration of man.

It is, however, acknowledged, that the system of sewering in the present day, when properly carried out, has reached a high state of perfection; but as the most necessary appendages (ventilating shafts) are often omitted, it appears to me not improbable that, with the aid of chemical and other sciences, the system of sewering might be rendered still more efficient in a sanatory and general point of view than it has yet attained. If you will allow me, through the medium of your journal, to suggest the subject to the consideration of sister professions, it might lead to beneficial results. With that view (however visionary it may appear to some), I beg to express my own ideas on the subject, and I will do so by simply stating, that it may be possible, by some chemical or other process, to render the foul air, generated within sewers or drains, perfectly innocuous, or, which would be equally effectual for the intended object, that the air may be rendered innocuous by some chemical, or it may be galvanic or other process, in its passage out, before it mixes with the atmosphere. If this can be accomplished by any simple or inexpensive means, it would be a great boon to society. The wonderful purifying process constantly going on in nature, seems to suggest the hint; and the effect of lightning as an occasional purifier of an over-charged atmosphere, affords another instructive lesson. There is undoubtedly a remedy, but we are ignorant of its practical application. Guillaume.

Southampton.

LORD MORPETH'S BILL.

The special committee of the Westminster Commissioners of Sewers, appointed to consider the "Health of Towns Bill," have made a report. With reference to the new body proposed to be created, and its functions, they remark,—

"The functions of the commissioners have hitherto been chiefly connected with drainage, *i. e.* drainage of surface, and the preservation of property from inroads of the sea, rivers, and water-courses, and the conducting waters into their proper channels. Undoubtedly Acts of Parliament have extended the powers of commissioners of sewers, but still they have never contemplated the law of sewers having immediate reference to sanatory considerations. That such a consideration is most important your committee feel most strongly; and your committee are glad to observe that the chief provisions which are contained in the bill for the improvement of the health of towns as to sewerage, or rather in the Towns Improvement clauses bill, in substance correspond with those contained in the bill presented to Parliament on behalf of this commission in the present session.

Your committee think it right to remind the court that this bill for the health of towns is a general measure for the whole country; and your committee cannot hesitate to express their conviction that some measure, having for its object the improving the sanatory condition of all classes, would recommend itself to the attention of the country."

In respect of Westminster, however, they think there are reasons why it should not be included by the Bill, but are not disposed to offer opposition.

"Your committee have already remarked that the Health of Towns Bill, or rather the Towns Improvement Clauses Bill, contains most valuable provisions as to drainage, and although your committee think that the court will probably be little disposed otherwise to interfere, yet they feel that the public duty of the court will require them to make such suggestions to her Majesty's Government, as their knowledge of the subject and the interest of the commissioners in the public welfare may dictate."

They think the new commissioners would have a great deal too much to do, to be able to attend to the sewage of the metropolis.

"Your committee, from long experience of the necessity, in such a metropolis, of great attention being given to the drainage, and from having so often desired to obtain clearer powers from Parliament, with this view, beg to suggest, that the earnest attention of her Majesty's Government should be respectfully invited to consider whether their own most excellent object and desire of improving the sewerage may not be put in peril by an attempt in the metropolis to mix up this subject with so many others. In smaller towns, and under different circumstances, this bill could probably be efficiently executed, and no doubt it would then confer great benefit; but, in the metropolis, would it not be better to leave it to one body, with amended and more defined powers, to attend to sewers, making their acts subject to the supervision of some department of her Majesty's Government, as above suggested? It must be borne in mind that any inadequacy of the operations of commissioners has arisen from the want of due powers, a consequence of the general laws of sewers being originally calculated for rural, and not for metropolitan districts. The same objection arises in the present measure, that what is necessary and proper for country towns is impracticable in the metropolis."

The New Water Colour Society.—The exhibition of the new Society of Painters in Water Colours, now open, is a very interesting one; we are compelled, however, to postpone any notice of it for the present.

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